



# Senator Sheila Kuehl

23<sup>rd</sup> District  
Newsletter  
February 2006

## Kuehl Legislation Speeds up Construction of the High Occupancy Lane on the 405

By Laurie Newman

Senate Bill 1026, authored by Senator Sheila Kuehl, was signed into law by the governor on January 13, 2006, just a few days after the bill received final approval by the legislature. The new law authorizes the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), in consultation with Caltrans, to use a design-build procurement process in order to construct a northbound high occupancy vehicle lane on the 405 Freeway between Routes 10 and 101. Senate Bill 1026 requires the MTA to establish and enforce labor compliance programs, such as prevailing wage and safety standards, as a condition to utilization of this design-build procurement process.

Senate Bill 1026 is important to commuters, as well as to commercial traffic, as surveys show that the 405 Freeway is one of the most congested and heavily trafficked highways in the country. Last year, Congressman Howard Berman secured \$130 million in federal funds for the 405 northbound HOV project, which, combined with state and local funds, will fully fund the project. The federal funds were in danger of being lost if construction doesn't begin by the time the federal highway legislation expires in 2009, and expediting this first step is critical because the project must go through environmental reviews and preliminary engineering before construction can begin.

Senate Bill 1026 will give Los Angeles' two transportation agencies the ability to use a design-build procurement

process on a project that is a crucial to relieving the congestion on the 405 as well as at the 101/405 interchange. Both agencies believe that this procurement process, in which both the design and construction of a project are procured from a single entity, will allow

them to break ground in time to meet the federal deadline so that precious federal dollars may be retained.

The bill received widespread support from the legislature and transportation advocates in the Los Angeles area. SB 1026 is one small step that will help to improve traffic and the overall quality of life in Los Angeles.



*Photo: SB 1026 bill signing ceremony. Pictured (left to right) are Speaker Fabian Nunez, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Congressman Brad Sherman, Senator Sheila Kuehl, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Assemblymember Paul Koretz, and Assemblymember Fran Pavley.*

*Laurie Newman is Senior Field Deputy in Senator Kuehl's District Office.*

### IN • THIS • ISSUE

- 2 PCH Task Force Tackles Cyclist and Pedestrian Issues
- 3 Ventura Job Loss Significantly Less Than Expected
- 3 Valley Overlook Named for Charles and Lotte Melhorn
- 3 Air Quality Expert Joins Kuehl Staff
- 4 California Senate Fellows Get Intensive Policy Training

# PCH Task Force Addresses Cyclist and Pedestrian Issues

---

*By Laurie Newman*

The PCH Task Force, first convened several years ago by Senator Kuehl, has been reconvened to work specifically on safety issues relating to cyclists' and pedestrians' use of the Highway. The Task Force has had great participation and leadership from a broad range of cyclists in our community, including members of the Velo Club La Grange, the Los Angeles Tri Club, the LA County Bicycle Coalition, and the City of LA's Bicycle Program, as well as Caltrans, law enforcement, all the relevant cities, and LA County.

Most people don't realize that PCH is a designated bike route. It is extremely important to make it safe for cyclists, but the Task Force is finding that it is not an easy or a simple task. The nature of the roadway, its natural constraints due to the cliffs on one side and the ocean on the other, make it virtually impossible to construct a bike path along a good portion of PCH from Santa Monica to Malibu. Cyclists who ride on PCH have a tendency to use the shoulder because it feels safer than riding in the heavily trafficked lanes. Many of these cyclists ride regularly in groups, are members of cycling clubs and often ride early in the morning, at high speeds.

I have learned a great deal from working with this group of dedicated cyclists who have put in a great deal of time with the task force. They remind me of the real meaning of those "Share the Road" signs: that this dedicated bike road is just as much there for cyclists as for automobiles.

The PCH Task Force has also been working closely with Caltrans to make critical changes to PCH. In the near future, Caltrans will be installing Share the Road signs, with a pictogram of a cyclist, at 16 locations along PCH. An additional 7 signs will be put up a later date.

Caltrans has also adopted new permitting procedures to ensure that, during construction, a minimum shoulder width will be maintained, and, in those instances when it is absolutely necessary to block a portion of the shoulder, Caltrans will carefully review the work hours and duration of the construction to make it as short as possible. Caltrans has assured us that they will consider cyclist safety whenever permits are issued. Caltrans will also make sure that there is ample signage to warn cyclists and motorists that bicycles will not be able to use the shoulder ahead, so that both drivers will have fair warning that bicycles may be merging into the

lane and bicyclists will have sufficient time to stop, if they need to.

Education is also an important component and the Task Force's next meeting will be devoted to these issues. Both the Auto Club and the DMV will be working with us on that endeavor. Our goal is to provide education to all the users of PCH so that drivers are aware that they must share the road with cyclists. In our efforts to improve safety and share the road, the PCH Task Force will continue to explore new opportunities to make our scenic state highway safer for everyone.

*Laurie Newman is Senior Field Representative in Senator Kuehl's District Office.*

---

## Ventura County Job Loss Significantly Less Than Expected

*By Hilda Garcia*

Thanks to the hard work of the Ventura County Economic Development Association's (VCEDA) Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) Task Force, Naval Base Ventura County will lose 416 jobs instead of the initial 2,250 positions that were slated to move to China Lake.

Comprised of retired military and civil servants as well as interested citizens, the BRAC Task Force worked for years to keep the Naval Base of Ventura County off the closure list and minimize job realignments during the BRAC 2005 process.

Last May, the federal BRAC Commission recommended moving 1,820 direct jobs from Point Mugu and 430 direct jobs from Port Hueneme to the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division at China Lake, which is located in the High Desert. On the chopping block were Naval Base Ventura County's armaments research, development, acquisition, test and evaluation functions.

The 416 direct jobs that will be affected by the realignment include the weapons and armaments functions from Point Mugu. Realignment of jobs will take place starting this year and end by 2011.

For more information about the BRAC Task Force, please visit: <http://www.vceda.org/bases/index.html>

*Hilda Garcia is a Field Representative in Senator Kuehl's District Office.*

---

# Valley Overlook named for Charles and Lotte Melhorn

---

By Laura Plotkin

On the sunny, chilly morning of Wednesday, November 30, 2005, with a magnificent panoramic view of the San Fernando Valley as a backdrop, the Overlook on the north side of Mulholland Drive, between Beverly Glen and Coldwater Canyons, was officially named the Charles and Lotte Melhorn Overlook. On the occasion of Lotte's 90th birthday week, the overlook was dedicated in her name and that of her beloved husband, Charlie, who passed away in 1983.

As a couple and as individuals, Lotte and Charlie contributed so much to the preservation and protection of the Santa Monica Mountains through their successful efforts beginning in the 1970's to create the Mulholland Scenic Parkway, as



well as Lotte's later work in support of the construction of the Sooky Goldman Nature Center in the 1980's at the National Parks Service's Franklin Canyon Park. From the beginning, starting with lobbying the City Council of the City of Los Angeles in the 1970's, they shared a love of nature, a passion to have its significance recognized and the energy and will to work vigorously to that end. Tributes by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Laura Plotkin of Senator Kuehl's office, and Joseph T. Edmiston and Jerry Daniel of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy were capped off with a birthday cake and a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday" to Lotte by old friends and well-wishers.

*Laura Plotkin is Senator Kuehl's District Director.*

*Photo: Lotte Melhorn at the Charles and Lotte Melhorn Overlook.*

## Air Quality Expert Joins Kuehl Staff

---

By Tam Ma

Marie Liu recently joined the staff of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water, chaired by Senator Sheila Kuehl. Marie fills the vacancy created when Committee Consultant Julia McIver left to assume her new post as the head of the Natural Resources Department for Yolo County.



As a committee consultant, Marie will analyze legislation presented for hearing by the Committee and will also be responsible for several Committee bills.

Marie began working for the Senate through the California Capital Fellows Program, a fellowship run jointly

by the California State Senate and CSU Sacramento. She worked for Senator Betty Karnette for three years before spending a year staffing the Senate Select Committee on Air Quality for Senator Dean Florez. Marie has diverse experience in the myriad of environmental issues facing California, especially those involving fish and wildlife, ocean resources, and global climate change.

Marie has a B.A. in Environmental Studies from U.C. Santa Cruz and a B.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from U.C. Berkeley. She also has a M.S. in Hydrological Sciences from U.C. Davis where she studied the role of air deposits on the loss of clarity of Lake Tahoe. In 2003, Marie completed the Water Education Foundation's Water Leaders Program. We are happy to have her join the Kuehl staff.

*Tam Ma is a Policy Consultant in Senator Kuehl's Capitol Office.*

---

*The 23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District includes the cities of Agoura Hills, Beverly Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Malibu, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Monica, West Hollywood and Westlake Village and the communities of Bel Air, Brentwood, Canoga Park, Encino, Hollywood, Mt. Olympus, Pacific Palisades, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, Tarzana, Topanga, West Los Angeles, West Hills, Westwood and Woodland Hills.*

---

# California Senate Fellows Get Intensive Public Policy Training

By Carol Wallisch

In late October, eighteen new staffers arrived at the State Capitol to participate in the yearlong California Senate Fellows Program. After an intensive five-week orientation covering the legislative process and California's political landscape, the Senate Fellows embarked on a series of interviews that culminated with their placement in various Senate Offices. Even among the broad array of options available to incoming Fellows, Senator Kuehl's office stood out as a popular choice. The office's reputation as an excellent place to work generates interest each year, and a Fellow has been placed with Senator Kuehl in every year but one.

The paths that lead to the Senate Fellows Program—a joint enterprise between the California State Senate and California State University, Sacramento (CSUS)—are as diverse as the cohort of fellows themselves. Because the program requires a bachelor's degree but no specific major or concentration, a broad array of academic disciplines and work experiences are represented. Drawn by an interest in public policy and politics and seeking the type of rigorous experience afforded by the fellowship, over 500 people apply to the program annually. After examining the policy statements, transcripts and work experience included in the applications, a committee of Capitol staffers and CSUS representatives winnows the pool down to 70 finalists who interview with the panel in person. The selection process concludes when eighteen applicants are offered admittance and become Senate Fellows.

Jonathan Snowden, a San Francisco Bay Area native, is this year's fellow in Senator Kuehl's office. A recent graduate of Stanford University, Jonathan majored in anthropology and pursued the premed curriculum. During his undergraduate years, Jonathan served as a student staff member at the Stanford LGBT Community Center, where he coordinated various programs for gay and lesbian undergrads as well as visibility campaigns directed to the broader campus community. He also has a background in public health, working on HIV/AIDS issues through both bench research and direct service in his hometown of Oakland. Jonathan was drawn to the Senate Fellows program by a desire to better understand health policy and the legislative issues relating to other social services. Once in the program, he gravitated toward Senator Kuehl's office for its progressive



agenda in the arenas of health, LGBT issues and women's rights. He is looking forward to continuing his work on these issues and learning about entirely new policy areas in the upcoming legislative session.

In addition to serving as full-time legislative staff in the state's

Upper House, Senate Fellows participate in a graduate seminar through the CSUS Government Department. This academic component of the program allows the Fellows to ground their experience in the broader context of California politics, and to earn 12 units of graduate credit in the process. Fellows also receive a monthly stipend of \$1972 plus full health, dental and vision benefits.

The Senate Fellowship is one of four programs that together make up the Capitol Fellows Program. The Assembly, Executive, and Judicial Fellowship Programs are also offered through CSUS, and applications for each are due February 22, 2006.

For more information, consult the Capitol Fellows website at: <http://www.csus.edu/calst/programs/>.

*Carol Wallisch is Senator Kuehl's Chief of Staff.*

## Capitol Office

State Capitol, Room 5108  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
phone (916) 651-4023 fax (916) 324-4823

## Los Angeles District Office

10951 W. Pico Blvd., Suite 202  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
phone (310) 441-9084 fax (310) 441-0724

## Oxnard District Office

300 W. Third Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
phone (805) 486-3776 fax (805) 486-4279